



13. Thorikos in Myth

The picture offered by ancient texts and inscriptions regarding Thorikos remains fragmentary, but the town did have a role in mythology. Notably, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (123-128:16), the goddess is said to have come ashore at Thorikos while travelling from Crete to Eleusis. Hesychios, a 5th-century AD lexicographer, attributed the name of the deme to an eponymous hero of whom little is known, but who is listed for regular worship in the famous inscription known as the Sacrificial Calendar of Thorikos, a *stèle* from the late 5th or 4th century BC. Another myth, perhaps echoing a Bronze Age past, was recorded by Pherekydes in the 5th century BC: the story of Kephalos and Prokris, later told in different versions f.ex. by Apollodoros, Ovid and Antoninus Liberalis. Kephalos, king of Thorikos and known for his beauty, was married to Prokris, daughter of King Erechtheus of Athens, but the marriage was plagued by mutual mistrust. Prokris, whom King Minos of Crete had given a spear that never missed its target and a dog named

Laelaps, swift as an arrow, passed these gifts on to her husband. Once, when he went hunting on mount Hymettos, she followed him, suspecting him of having an affair. She hid in the bushes to observe him, but he thought he heard an animal rustling there, threw his spear and killed his wife. Erechtheus is said to have buried her, while Kephalos was exiled and eventually committed suicide.

RFD, MW



Red-figure lekythos by the Pan Painter, c. 470 BC, showing Kephalos and Laelaps (inv. No. 13.198: Photograph © 2018 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

References: Labarbe 1977, 13-25; *SEG* XXXIII, 147 cfr. Lupu 2005, 113-49.

